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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BUCHAREST 000902

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [ECON](#) [RO](#)

SUBJECT: ROMANIAN-ISRAELI POLITICIAN LEAVES EXTREME
NATIONALIST PARTY CLAIMING ANTI-SEMITISM

REF: A. A) BUCHAREST 0716

[B. B\)](#) 03 BUCHAREST 3991

Classified By: [POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF ROBERT GILCHRIST FOR REASONS 1.
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[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: The only Jewish MP from Vadim Tudor,s extreme nationalist Greater Romania Party (PPRM) resigned from the party April 7 due to publication of an article in one of Tudor,s publications denying the existence of the Holocaust in Romania. The PPRM responded by expelling the MP -- Nati Meir -- from the party for &blackmail and intolerance.⁸ Tudor has sought to use Meir over the past year and a half as &proof⁸ that the PPRM is no longer anti-Semitic. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) From 2003 until a few days ago, extreme nationalist politician and founder of the Greater Romania Party Popular Party (PPRM) Corneliu Vadim Tudor publicly boasted of his alliance with Israeli-Romanian businessman Nati Meir. Tudor, who had begun calling himself a philo-Semite after years of anti-Semitic discourse, asserted that Meir,s inclusion in the PPRM demonstrated that neither Tudor nor his party harbored anti-Semitic views. Meir, an Israeli of Romanian origin who reportedly returned to Romania to pursue business interests in the late 1990,s, entered Parliament on the slate of the Greater Romanian Party (PRM) -- the antecedent to the PPRM -- in 2004. Meir has been among Tudor,s most outspoken defenders, going so far as to write a letter to the DCM in 2004 insisting that Tudor is not an anti-Semite.

[1](#)3. (SBU) However, the Tudor-Meir love fest publicly shattered April 7 when Meir announced his plans to quit the PPRM following the publication of an editorial in Tudor,s daily newspaper &The Tricolor⁸ denying the existence of a Romanian Holocaust. Meir vowed to leave the PPRM unless the newspaper and the party retracted the editorial. Tudor,s riposte was an April 8 banner headline declaring that &Deputy Meir Was Excluded from the PPRM for Blackmail and Intolerance.⁸ The article claims that the PPRM,s leaders, decision was based on Meir,s &violation of party rules⁸ and actions &detrimental to the party.⁸

[1](#)4. (SBU) &The Tricolor⁸ also reprinted a PPRM press release claiming that the April 7 Romanian Holocaust denial article represents neither the point of view of the PPRM nor its leaders. The release asserted that the PPRM could not accept &blackmail and threats⁸ from Meir, whom it accused of ties with organized crime and of &anti-Christian fundamentalism⁸ because of his alleged refusal to enter a church to attend a ceremony involving other party members. (Note: Although the editorial appears in the newspaper essentially as an open letter from historian and former Deputy Petre Turlea to Tudor, its prominent &above the fold⁸ placement on &The Tricolor,s⁸ front page implies an endorsement from the paper - and Tudor. The article itself is a complex mishmash of pseudo-scholarly, ultranationalist theorizing. End Note.)

The Murky Mr. Meir

[1](#)5. (SBU) Nati Meir became Tudor,s foreign affairs adviser in 2003, coinciding with the early phase of Tudor,s campaign to clean up his image and portray himself as a mainstream conservative in the Christian Democratic tradition. Meir played a key role in directing Tudor,s public relations campaign and reportedly was involved in negotiating a controversial agreement between Tudor and an Israeli consulting firm. Press reports suggest that Meir exploited his personal relationship with Tudor, taking payoffs from would be politicians who sought a place on the PRM,s electoral lists. These reports gibe with assertions from political insiders who tell us that some slots on the PRM,s lists in 2000 and 2004 were &for sale.⁸

[1](#)6. (SBU) Several reports in the Romanian media over the past year have alleged that Nati Meir was convicted in Israel of fraud prior to his involvement with Tudor. An Israeli diplomat based in Bucharest told PolOff that Meir is &a crook⁸ with a history of criminal wrongdoing in Israel. The diplomat noted that, for Tudor and the PPRM, Meir was &the hen that did not lay the golden egg,⁸ observing that

Tudor,s attempt to include a Jewish politician in his party in order to prove his &philo-Semitic credentials⁸ had simultaneously alienated Tudor,s ultranationalist supporters and failed to gain him new votes in the fall 2004 parliamentary and presidential elections. Independent political observers also stress that Tudor,s star has waned: in 2000, Tudor was in the presidential election runoff; in the fall 2004 presidential elections, he did not get past the first round.

As Ye Sow, So Shall Ye Reap

17. (C) Comment. Iulian Sorin, the Secretary General of the Federation of the Jewish Communities (FCER), observed to EmbOff that Meir &is now reaping what he sowed,⁸ noting that the Romanian Jewish community, as well as the vast majority of the Romanian public, have never accepted Tudor,s claims that he has become a &philo-Semite.⁸ Tudor,s attempts to eventually take the PPRM into the European Popular Party bloc in the European Parliament may prevent him from overtly embracing the blatant anti-Semitic views he and his party expressed in the past. He desperately seeks credibility and mainstream acceptance, which he viewed as fundamental to his success in 2000. Nonetheless, we expect to continue seeing subtle reminders of PPRM,s xenophobic and anti-Semitic roots, as the party seeks to retain its base among the most extreme elements of the Romanian electorate. This may happen through veiled references, as we have seen recently in Tudor publications, to "Jewish conspiracies" or denial of Romania,s irrefutable role in the Holocaust. End Comment.

18. (U) Amembassy Bucharest,s reporting telegrams, as well as daily press summaries, are available on the Bucharest SIPRNET Website: www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/bucharest
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